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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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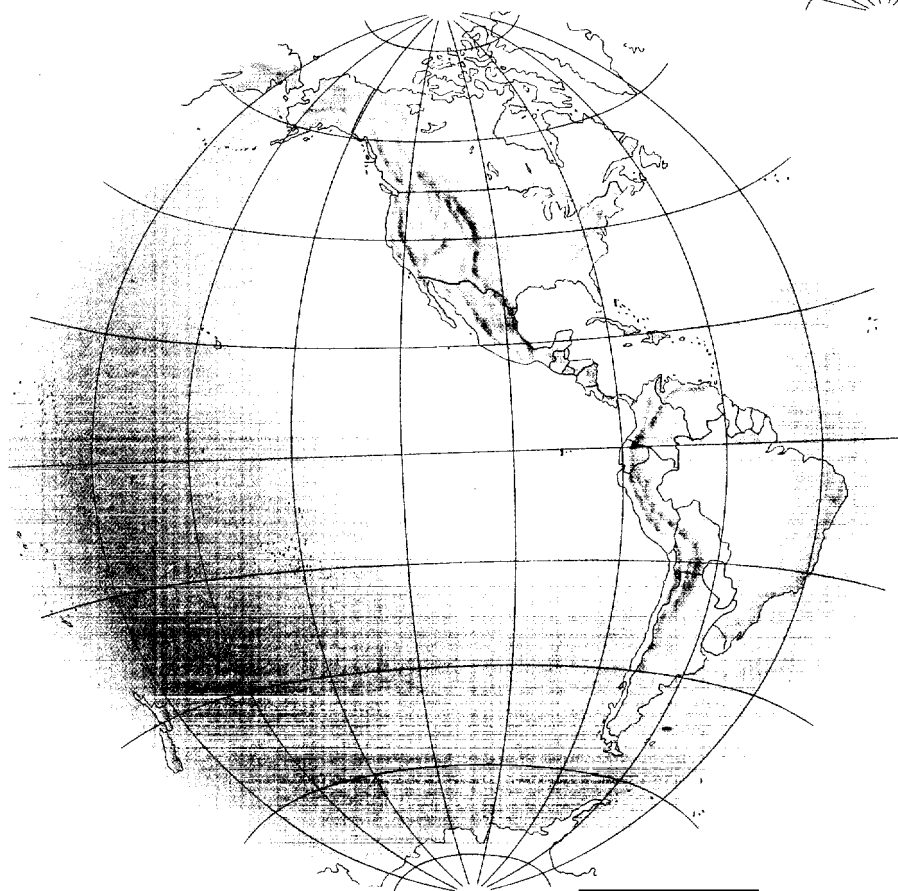
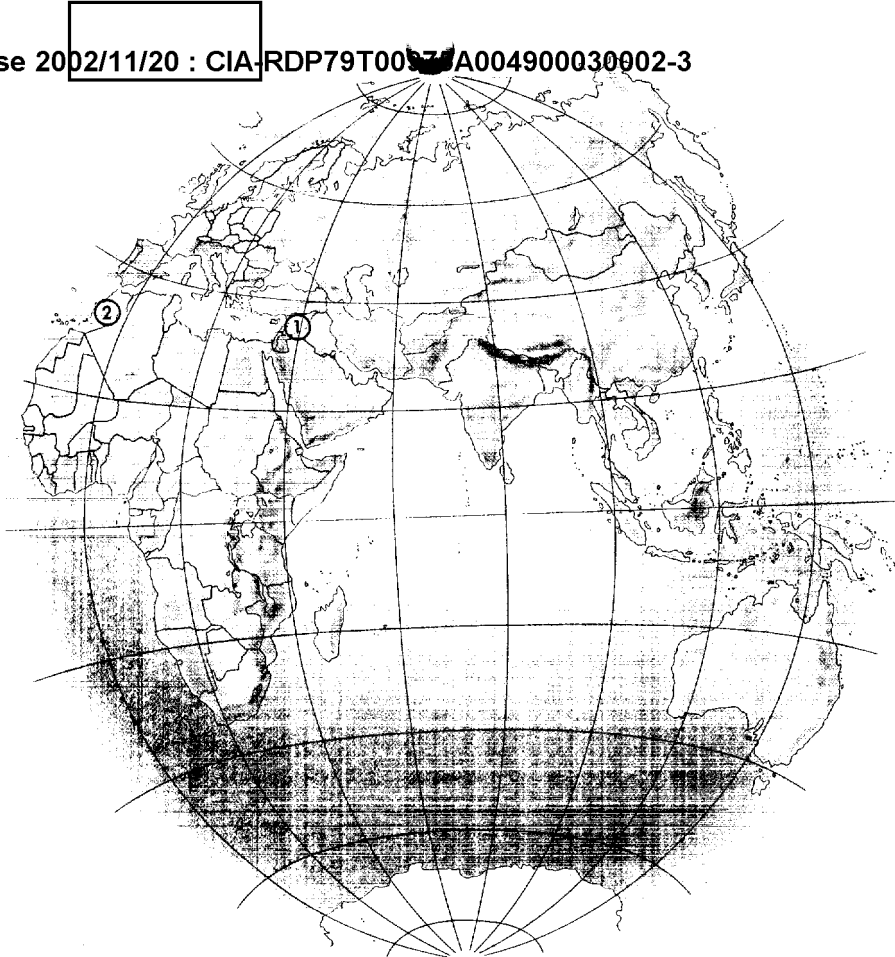
6 JANUARY 1960

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

UAR regime's position with Syrian conservatives probably improved as result of Nasir-Baath split, but other Syrian problems remain.

Moroccan political situation continues uneasy, although leftists have decided to avoid showdown for time being; Premier Ibrahim reportedly plans to resign about 1 March.



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

6 January 1960

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

OK Morocco: The political situation in Morocco continues uneasy, but the various divergent forces are apparently agreed that the government of Premier Ibrahim should continue in office until the King's return from his forthcoming tour of Arab capitals. Leftist elements which had threatened to challenge royal police authority last month have decided to avoid a showdown for the time being. [New difficulties may arise, however, if Ibrahim carries out his reported plan to resign about 1 March and is replaced by a new government less representative of urban and labor elements.]

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OK UAR: President Nasir's split with the socialist Baath party, evidenced by last week's resignation of five party members from the Syrian region cabinet, has probably improved his regime's standing in the eyes of more conservative Syrian elements. Nevertheless, his regime still faces a difficult task in maintaining public confidence in Syria. The late arrival of winter rains threatens a severe grain shortage for the third consecutive year, and Vice President Amir's measures to improve the general economic situation will not be productive for some time. The major Syrian complaint--Egyptian domination of the union--may be ameliorated somewhat, however, if Nasir makes significant concessions to the Syrians in his selection of a new cabinet and parliament next month.

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Nasir Still Faces Difficulties in Syria

President Nasir's split with the socialist Baath party, evidenced by last week's resignation of five party members from the Syrian region cabinet, has probably improved his regime's standing in the eyes of more conservative Syrian elements. These elements--landowners, merchants, and old-line politicians--now probably hope for a larger role in managing Syrian affairs, denied them by the powerful, socialist Baathists who controlled Syrian politics at the time of union with Egypt two years ago. Nasir--who sought conservative support in undermining Baathist strength in last July's elections--may make further concessions to these elements in his selection of a new cabinet and parliament next month.

Despite any gain in conservative support, however, the Nasir regime still faces formidable difficulties in maintaining its prestige in Syria while attempting to hold together the two-year-old union. Enforcement of its ban on party activity and the strict security measures imposed within the army seems to depend largely on the watchdog apparatus maintained by former colonel Abd al-Hamid Sarraj, who is essentially an opportunist and might decide to take advantage of Syrian opposition to serve his own interests. In addition, the Baathists, although outlawed, still retain a significant following, including members of the military.

Another threat to the regime is the worsening economic situation in Syria. Lack of adequate rain for winter crops is expected to reduce drastically Syria's grain harvest and supply of livestock. This third successive year of drought will intensify the economic pinch, which has been popularly blamed on the Egyptians, and the regime's moves to further state

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control of the heretofore free Syrian economy are resented on nearly all levels. UAR Vice President Amir's current mission in Syria is to reassure the Syrian public of the government's good intentions as well as to expedite reform and industrialization measures. Although his reception in Syria has been generally good, his efforts will not have immediate visible results; meanwhile, Syrian dissidence may increase.

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